

**INITIATIVE 236**

I, Ralph Munro, Secretary of State of the State of Washington and custodian of its seal, hereby certify that, according to the records on file in my office, the attached copy of Initiative Measure No. 236 to the Legislature is a true and correct copy as it was received by this office.

1 AN ACT Relating to American-English as the official language of  
2 Washington state; and adding new sections to chapter 1.20 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The American-English language is the  
5 official language of the state of Washington.

6 (2) As the official language of this state, American-English is the  
7 language of the ballot, public schools, and all government functions  
8 and actions.

9 (3) This section applies to:

10 (a) The legislative, executive, and judicial branches of  
11 government;

12 (b) All political subdivisions, departments, agencies,  
13 organizations, and instrumentalities of the state, including local  
14 governments and municipalities;

15 (c) All statutes, ordinances, rules, orders, contracts, programs,  
16 pamphlets, and policies; and

17 (d) All government officials and employees during the performance  
18 of government business.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.**    The state and all political subdivisions of  
2 the state must take all reasonable steps to preserve, protect, enhance,  
3 and support the role of the American-English language as the official  
4 language of the state of Washington.

5        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 3.**    (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of  
6 this section:

7            (a) The state and all political subdivisions of the state must act  
8 in American-English and in no other language.

9            (b) No entity to which this section applies may make or enforce a  
10 law, order, decree, or policy that requires the use of a language other  
11 than American-English.

12           (c) No governmental document shall be valid, effective, or  
13 enforceable unless it is in the American-English language.

14           (2) The state and all political subdivisions of the state may act  
15 in a language other than American-English under any of the following  
16 circumstances:

17            (a) To assist students who are not proficient in the  
18 American-English language, to the extent necessary to comply with  
19 federal law, by giving educational instruction in a language other than  
20 American-English to provide as rapid as possible a transition to  
21 American-English;

22            (b) To comply with other federal laws;

23            (c) To teach a student a foreign language as a part of a required  
24 or voluntary educational curriculum;

25            (d) To protect public health or safety;

26            (e) To protect the rights of criminal defendants or victims of  
27 crime; and

28            (f) For historical or ceremonial functions.

29        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 4.**    A person who resides in or does business in  
30 the state has standing to bring suit to enforce this section in a court  
31 of record of the state.    The legislature may enact reasonable  
32 limitations on the time and manner of bringing suit under this section.

33        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 5.**    If any provision of this act or its  
34 application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the  
35 remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other  
36 persons or circumstances is not affected.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 6.**    Sections 1 through 4 of this act are each  
2 added to chapter 1.20 RCW.

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